

**ABSTRACT**

An inexpensive method and apparatus for detecting and characterizing interference in wideband communication channels obviates the need for expensive prior art Digital Signal Processors (DSPs) and complex custom software, by novelly including with the spectrum analyzer, a burst clamp and an automatic gain control (AGC) circuit upstream of the spectrum analyzer, and a general purpose computer (such as a micro-computer). The burst clamp and AGC circuit (with a time constant  $\tau_{AGC}$  set much larger than the time constant of the burst interference signal time constant  $\tau_I$ ) operate to suppress the monitored signal at the input of the spectrum analyzer during the burst intervals to thereby indicate the presence of interference. The burst clamp and AGC circuit also provide for rapid recovery of the monitored signal after the burst. Connected to the output of the spectrum analyzer, the computer determines the interference type (burst or continuous wave (CW)).